

10 Tips on Increasing Your Confidence

By: Mary Jane Reed, Regional Vice President

1. **Body Language Matters** – Research shows that assuming a “power position” increases our feelings of confidence. Assuming a power position for as little as two-minutes increases testosterone and reduces cortisol, giving us the feeling of power and confidence. Furthermore, someone with open and expansive body language is perceived as confident by others.
2. **Slow Down and Speak Up** – People who speak in a low vocal tone and a calm and relaxed manner are perceived as more confident. Ask for feedback on how well you communicate in meetings. Do you speak too rapidly? Is your volume too low? Is your voice pitch too high? If you do not contribute in meetings, you will quickly become invisible. To be noticed, make an effort to speak up early and often, in every meeting you attend.
3. **Do not overthink it....Just do it** – Since most women use both sides of their brain simultaneously, we often have circular conversations in our heads. When this happens, take several deep breaths, cease self-criticism and take action. Confidence is all about executing on our thoughts and ideas.
4. **Take on New Challenges** – The best learning always happens when we take on a new project or challenge, even if the task seems formidable. Think back to all you have learned in the past and remember you can do it again. Taking on new challenges of increasing complexity is key to building your confidence.
5. **Ask for Feedback and Help** – Feedback is the “breakfast of champions.” Ask a trusted colleague for feedback on how you are perceived by others. Remember to listen attentively and do not become defensive. If you wish to make a change (i.e., speaking up more in meetings), share your intent with your colleague and ask him or her to observe you in a meeting and provide specific feedback.
6. **Build Mentoring Relationships** – Build a network of trusted colleagues with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Seek their guidance when faced with new situations and gain their insights into the broader picture of your business. Find people who will help you move out of your comfort zone and onto the next level.
7. **Take Care of Yourself** – When we are overwhelmed with work and life, we rarely show up at our best. Reflect on what helps you to reduce stress so you can take care of yourself and be at your best in the workplace.
8. **Do Not Copy Men** – Men often appear confident by demonstrating aggressive behavior. Using aggressive behavior or language rarely works well for women. Instead, we need to find our own “assertive sweet spot,” that demonstrates confidence without being aggressive. Again, your voice tone and body language are critical in accurately conveying your intent.
9. **Cultivate Your Emotional Intelligence** – Self-knowledge is the key to wisdom. Knowing your emotional triggers and learning to manage them is a fundamental part of success.
10. **Become a Student of Leadership** – Read books and articles on leadership to learn what leaders do and do not do. The more you are exposed to great examples of leadership, the more confident you will be in your own leadership capabilities.

